

their society, the dispute did not as yet come to any definite head. Without rescinding their decrees the Elders were content for the present not to enforce them ; but three years later they renewed their demands and D'Israeli, no longer under the restraint of his father's influence, responded by insisting that his name should be erased from the list of their members. His resignation was not formally accepted till several years had elapsed, but the connexion of the D'Israeli family with the Synagogue was now at an end.

Isaac D'Israeli though he ceased to be a Jew never became a Christian ; and apparently he saw no reason at first why his children should not remain in the same amphibious condition. 'It was Mr. Sharon Turner<sup>1</sup> who persuaded my father — after much trouble — to allow his children to be baptized. He, one day, half consented, upon which Mr. Turner called on the day following and took us off to St. Andrew's, 5 Holborn.' This was Lord Beaconsfield's account of the matter in his later days, and no doubt it fairly represents the general situation; but like many of his autobiographic recollections it is inaccurate in detail, for the children were not all baptized on one day. Benjamin himself 'was received into the Church on July 31, 1817, the two younger boys, Ralph and James, having preceded him earlier in the month, and his sister following after a short interval. No one could have

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neither the Elders of the Synagogue who forced the rupture, nor the Voltairian father, nor the zealous family friend, nor Mr. Thimbleby who in Benjamin's case performed the ceremony of baptism. If the gentlemen of the Mahamad had shown less obstinacy or more worldly wisdom — and it was only, we are told, a question of two or three votes — that strange political career which was to fascinate a later generation might well have been impossible.

Whether it was that the change of religion made a

<sup>1</sup> The well-known historian of Anglo-Saxon England.

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